

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 37-39 have been amended as follows.

37. (Amended) A purified nucleic acid molecule consisting essentially of 10 to 40 sequential nucleotides for distinguishing *E. coli* from *Shigella* species, the molecule comprising: a sequence of nucleotides from SEQ ID NO:7 which include an inserted nucleotide U or T in between positions 88 and 89 of either 16s ribosomal RNA or 16 s ribosomal DNA, respectively, said positions being with position reference to an *E. coli* equivalent position of SEQ ID NO:7 the identifying nucleotide presence indicating *E. coli* species and distinguishing *E. coli* from *Shigella* species,

or an RNA equivalent thereof,

or a nucleic acid molecule complementary to said molecule.

38. (Amended) A purified nucleic acid molecule consisting essentially of 10 to 40 sequential nucleotides for identifying *Shigella sonnei* species, the molecule comprising: a sequence of nucleotides from Table 2 and comprising an identifying nucleotide C at position 964 or a deletion at position 978 with resulting frameshift selected from the group consisting of sequences of nucleotides in Table 2 which include (a) nucleotide C at position 964 or (b) a deletion at position 978 of either 16s ribosomal RNA or 16 s ribosomal DNA, said positions being with position reference to an *E. coli* equivalent position of SEQ ID NO: 7, the identifying nucleotide presence or the deletion indicating *Shigella sonnei* species and distinguishing from *E. coli* and from other *Shigella* species,

or an RNA equivalent thereof,

or a nucleic acid molecule complementary to said molecule.

39. (Amended) A purified nucleic acid molecule consisting essentially of 10 to 40 sequential nucleotides for identifying *Shigella dysenteriae* species, the molecule comprising: a sequence of nucleotides from Table 2 and comprising an identifying nucleotide A at position 76 selected from the group consisting of sequences of nucleotides in Table 2 which include nucleotide A at position 76 of either 16S ribosomal RNA or 16S ribosomal DNA, said position being with position reference to an *E. coli* equivalent position of SEQ ID NO: 7, the identifying nucleotide presence indicating *Shigella dysenteriae* species and distinguishing from *E. coli* and from other *Shigella* species,

or an RNA equivalent thereof,

or a nucleic acid molecule complementary to said molecule.